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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 000979

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2018  
TAGS: EIND ENRG EPET PINS PTER YM  
SUBJECT: YEMEN PIPELINE ATTACK

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Pipeline Target Practice

¶1. (C) On June 1 the Yemeni Soldiers' Brigade (a group associated with Al-Qaida which claimed responsibility for the attack on the embassy in March) claimed responsibility for what it called a "mortar attack" on the oil pipeline near a state-run refinery in Aden on May 30. Media reporting varies as to the number and type of explosions, as does information from Embassy contacts. CPT Najib Kelfah, an officer with the Directorate of Military Intelligence, told PolOff on May 31 that the assailants fired two RPG rounds from an estimated distance of 1000 meters. Kelfah mentioned that the maximum effective range for an RPG is 500 meters, so the assailants apparently are not well trained. Post has heard from different sources that the attack was variously, an RPG, a mortar, an IED in a dumpster, and even, at one point, an exploding electrical transformer.

¶2. (C) On June 2 Majlis ash-shoura speaker Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani told the DCM that ROYG officials had arrested a number of AQ operatives in Aden in conjunction with the attack, but was unable to provide additional details.

Comment

¶3. (U) While Post has no way of confirming that the attack was committed by the Yemeni Soldier's Brigade, similarities to previous attacks, including inaccurate targeting, three rounds expended and the way responsibility was claimed, would support the organization's claim. Oil facilities have long been a target of AQ.

SECHE